

of facilities for reconstructive surgery, both through training to increase the skills of professional men generally, and through extending hospital accommodations. Demands for reconstructive surgery will be augmented after the war.

The Society aims to foster opportunities for surgeons generally, outside its membership, to increase their knowledge and skill to meet needs which are already becoming apparent.

Additional information may be secured from the secretary, Dr. Jacob Daley, 104 East Fortieth Street, New York 16, N. Y.

United States Aid Sought for Laboratory.—Renovation of Building No. 20 at the General Hospital at a cost of \$175,000 and its equipment as a laboratory and classroom for medical students may be made possible by a contribution of that amount from the Federal Works Administration, it was disclosed yesterday.

A. J. Will, County Superintendent of Charities, has requested permission from the Board of Supervisors to apply for the money needed, pointing out that the laboratory and classroom are needed. Will said that the building, if renovated and equipped, will be leased to the University of Southern California for the use of first and second-year medical students for a token fee.

At the close of the emergency, Will said, the building would revert to county service fully renovated and equipped.—Los Angeles Times, November 28.

Heart Disease Toll to Mount.—Medical science believes that for the first time it is coming to grips with rheumatic fever on something like even terms.

But heart diseases—rheumatic fever, high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries are the commonest and deadliest types—still constitute the nation's No. 1 killer and will increase in coming years.

These conclusions were reported on November 4 by Dr. Tinsley R. Harrison, heart specialist of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in San Francisco as guest speaker at the fourteenth annual postgraduate symposium on heart disease. The symposium was sponsored by the Heart Committee of the San Francisco Tuberculosis Association.

Lecturing at Stanford Hospital, Doctor Harrison presented the novel argument that there can be too much rest in some cases of heart disease.

"I believe rest is like any other treatment," he said. "You can overdo it. I know that most men in our field disagree with me."

One of his reasons for believing that rest can be "abused," he said, is that constant inactivity can tend to produce a querulous psychotic.

Reporting on rheumatic fever, which accounts for most cases of heart disease in persons under forty, Doctor Harrison said:

"Just in the past few years there has developed evidence that certain drugs of the sulfa and salicylate groups, used immediately after discovery of throat infection, are effective."

Since heart disease is, in most cases, an affliction of those past fifty, heart disease can be expected to increase as man's normal span of years is increased, the specialist said.

"And we're not going to make much progress against it until we know the causes of the heart disease," he added.

Doctor Harrison presented the view that liquor in small quantities does no harm to the patient with heart disease.

"What little evidence there is on the subject indicates that slight drinking would be more beneficial than harmful," he said. He defined slight drinking as drinking so light that there is no evidence of intoxication and no interference with eating habits.

LETTERS[†]

Concerning Consent to Operation Upon Married Women Under Twenty-One Years of Age:

(COPY)

San Francisco, November 24, 1943.

My dear Doctors:

We have been asked what consent should be obtained before performing medical or surgical operations upon married women under the age of twenty-one years, particularly those whose husbands are absent in military service.

California Civil Code, Section 204, provides that the authority of a parent ceases upon a Court appointment of a guardian of a child, upon the child's marriage, or upon its attaining majority. In view of this section, the consent of the parents of a girl under the age of twenty-one years is not sufficient to adequately protect a physician if the girl is married.

Civil Code, Section 25, provides that minors are all persons under twenty-one years of age, provided that any girl of the age of eighteen or over who has contracted a lawful marriage is deemed to be of the age of majority and an adult person for the purpose of entering into any transaction. Under this section the consent of the girl eighteen years of age or over, who is married and upon whom the operation is to be performed, is sufficient.

If the girl is less than eighteen years of age and is married, the consent of her husband should be obtained before any operation is performed upon her. If he is absent in military service, making it impossible to obtain his consent, in our opinion you should not perform any services other than emergency, in which event consent is presumed.

If you have any further questions, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

HARTLEY F. PEART.

Concerning Recent Articles in "California and Western Medicine":

NATIONAL PHYSICIANS' COMMITTEE FOR THE
EXTENSION OF MEDICAL SERVICE

*A Nonpolitical, Nonprofit Organization for Maintaining
Ethical and Scientific Standards and Extending
Medical Service to All the People*

The Pittsfield Building, Chicago, Illinois

November 11, 1943.

To the Editor:—This will acknowledge receipt of and express appreciation for your valued letter of November 1 and the receipt of the August and October issues of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE.

May I congratulate you. The handling of the de Kruif opus is unusually good; comment on the Wagner-Murray Bill 1161 is clear-cut, concise, and effective. Thank you, Doctor Kress, for the kind references to N. P. C.

There can be no question but that we are moving forward to a point of final settlement. If we can maintain interest and sustain efforts that have been initiated, there can be little doubt as to the defeat of S. 1161, but more important, the prospect of permanently influencing the trend toward state control of medical service.

With the best of personal good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

NATIONAL PHYSICIANS' COMMITTEE FOR E. M. S.

(Signed) John M. Pratt,

Executive Administrator.

[†] CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE does not hold itself responsible for views expressed in articles or letters when signed by the author.